

4.9 Population, Employment and Housing

4.9.1 Introduction

This section describes the environmental setting for Population and Housing. Demographic trends across California can greatly affect natural resource availability and use. In addition, increasing population in the foothill counties of the Sierra and rural forested areas in Southern California has increased the likelihood of exposure of people and homes to wildland fires.

California is comprised of 58 counties and has a population estimated at 37,253,956 (U. S. Census Bureau, 2011). Of the 50 States, California is the most urban, with 95% of its population living in the urban area that comprises about five percent of the land. Urban lands can be incorporated or unincorporated areas, with the unincorporated areas generally being less populated and on the fringe of metropolitan areas. Approximately 17% of the population lives in unincorporated areas, which constitute roughly 80% of the total land area (http://www.dof.ca.gov/research/demographic/state_census_data_center/census_2010/documents/2010Census_Pop_Rankers.xls). In recent history, California's population has dwarfed that of all other states, and the population growth has consistently outpaced the rest of the United States. California is home to seven of the nation's ten most densely populated urban areas. The nation's most densely populated area is Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim, populated by close to 7,000 people per square mile. This is followed by San Francisco-Oakland (6,266 people per square mile), San Jose (5,820 people per square mile, and Delano (5,483 people per square mile) (U. S. Census Bureau, March 2012). The following section describes population trends statewide and for each of the bioregions in California. Although there have been some trends towards increasing population in the interior portions of California (i.e. Central Valley) the majority of the population (about 80%) still resides in coastal counties.

4.9.2 Population Growth and Extent

California is the most populous state in the nation and continues to grow. Over the past decade the state has grown by 10%, slightly outpacing the 9.7% average growth nationwide. However, since the economic downturn of 2008, its rate of growth has slowed considerably. In fact, net figures show that 1.5 million more people left the state than immigrated to it over the past decade. According to the Pew Hispanic Center (April 2012) there has been a significant drop in illegal and legal immigration from Mexico due to a weak U.S economy, lack of jobs, increased deportation, increased border patrols, and decreased birth rates. Thus the recent growth in population has been due solely to natural increase – more in-state births than deaths. While the vast majority of Californians live in urban areas, a large portion of the state resides in rural counties. These rural cities and counties are in some cases growing at a faster rate than the major urbanized areas.

As residential and commercial land use continues to encroach on natural landscapes, population growth will influence the state's natural ecosystems in several ways. First, continued population growth necessitates the use and development of increasing areas of forests and particularly rangelands for people to live and work in. Second, the greater ethnic diversity, an aging population, and increasing incomes further drive new and varied demands for open space, outdoor recreation, natural reserves, and working landscapes that provide employment opportunities. Third,

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most Californians live in urban areas. This urban population drives attitudes and preferences that influence the willingness to support management goals and investment in forests and rangelands.

The majority of Californians live in areas characterized by dense development. As of 2010, about 80 percent of California's 37.3 million people lived within the boundaries of census blocks averaging at least one housing unit per acre (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). In 2011, California had 18 cities with a population over 200,000 and 69 cities exceeding 100,000. The California Department of Finance (DOF) reports that roughly one quarter of all Californians (9.4 million) live in the ten largest cities (California Department of Finance, 2011). California has experienced continuing population growth of about 10% from 2000 to 2010 (on average about a 1% annual growth rate).

California's population growth over the past decade has not been equally distributed across all bioregions. Of the 58 counties in the State, 55 had population growth during the time period of 2000-2010, and three counties, all in the Sierra bioregion experienced population declines over the decade. On a bioregion level, the Mojave, Sierra, Colorado Desert, and San Joaquin bioregions all experienced over-all growth rates that equaled or exceeded 20 percent over that period, or about twice the state average (Table 4.9.1).

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Table 4.9.1
Past Population Growth in California by Bioregion and County (2000 - 2010)

Bioregion/county	2000	2010	Percent change 2000-2010	Bioregion/county	2000	2010	Percent change 2000-2010
California	33,871,653	37,253,956	10%	San Joaquin Valley			
Bay/Delta				Fresno County	799,407	930,450	16%
Alameda County	1,443,741	1,510,271	5%	Kern County	661,645	839,631	27%
Contra Costa County	948,816	1,049,025	11%	Kings County	129,461	152,982	18%
Marin County	247,289	252,409	2%	Madera County	123,109	150,865	23%
Napa County	124,279	136,484	10%	Merced County	210,554	255,793	21%
San Francisco County	776,733	805,235	4%	San Joaquin County	563,598	685,306	22%
San Mateo County	707,163	718,451	2%	Stanislaus County	446,997	514,453	15%
Santa Clara County	1,682,585	1,781,642	6%	Tulare County	368,021	442,179	20%
Solano County	394,542	413,344	5%	Totals	3,302,792	3,971,659	20%
Sonoma County	458,614	483,878	6%	Sierra			
Totals	6,783,762	7,150,739	5%	Alpine County	1,208	1,175	-3%
Colorado Desert				Amador County	35,100	38,091	9%
Imperial County	142,361	174,528	23%	Calaveras County	40,554	45,578	12%
Modoc				El Dorado County	156,299	181,058	16%
Lassen County	33,828	34,895	3%	Inyo County	17,945	18,546	3%
Modoc County	9,449	9,686	3%	Mariposa County	17,130	18,251	7%
Totals	43,277	44,581	3%	Mono County	12,853	14,202	10%
Mojave				Nevada County	92,033	98,764	7%
Riverside County	1,545,387	2,189,641	42%	Placer County	248,399	348,432	40%
San Bernardino County	1,709,434	2,035,210	19%	Plumas County	20,824	20,007	-4%
Totals	3,254,821	4,224,851	30%	Sierra County	3,555	3,240	-9%
North Coast/Klamath				Tuolumne County	54,504	55,365	2%
Del Norte County	27,507	28,610	4%	Totals	700,404	842,709	20%
Humboldt County	126,518	134,623	6%	Central Coast			
Lake County	58,309	64,665	11%	Monterey County	401,762	415,057	3%
Mendocino County	86,265	87,841	2%	San Benito County	53,234	55,269	4%
Siskiyou County	44,301	44,900	1%	San Luis Obispo County	246,681	269,637	9%
Trinity County	13,022	13,786	6%	Santa Barbara County	399,347	423,895	6%

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Totals	355,922	374,425	5%	Santa Cruz County	255,602	262,382	3%
Sacramento Valley				Ventura County	753,197	823,318	9%
Butte County	203,171	220,000	8%	Totals	2,109,823	2,249,558	7%
Colusa County	18,804	21,419	14%	South Coast			
Glenn County	26,453	28,122	6%	Los Angeles County	9,519,338	9,818,605	3%
Sacramento County	1,223,499	1,418,788	16%	Orange County	2,846,289	3,010,232	6%
Shasta County	163,256	177,223	9%	San Diego County	2,813,833	3,095,313	10%
Sutter County	78,930	94,737	20%	Totals	15,179,460	15,924,150	5%
Tehama County	56,039	63,463	13%				
Yolo County	168,660	200,849	19%				
Yuba County	60,219	72,155	20%				
Totals	1,999,031	2,296,756	15%				

Source: http://www.dof.ca.gov/research/demographic/state_census_data_center/census_2010/documents/201Census_Pop_Rankers.xls

The top ten fastest growing counties between 2000 and 2010 had average annual growth rates ranging from 2 percent in Yuba to 4.2 percent in Riverside County (Table 4.9.2). While most of the fastest growing counties have extensive areas of forest and rangeland, three forest and rangeland counties did not grow – Plumas, Sierra and Alpine counties all experienced declining populations over the period.

Table 4.9.2

Top Ten Fastest Growing Counties (2000 – 2010) and Percentage Forest and Rangeland

County	County population April 1, 2010	Percent change 2000-2010	Percent of county area in forests and rangelands
Riverside	2,189,641	41.7	82
Placer	348,432	40.3	81
Kern	839,631	26.9	73
Imperial	174,528	22.6	77
Madera	150,865	22.5	64
San Joaquin	685,306	21.6	20
Merced	255,793	21.5	47
Tulare	442,179	20.2	63
Sutter	94,737	20.0	15
Yuba	72,155	19.8	67

Source:

http://www.dof.ca.gov/research/demographic/state_census_data_center/census_2010/documents/2010Census_Pop_Rankers.xls ;
CAL FIRE, 2006 (fveg06)

In the last decade, California's ten largest cities experienced population changes ranging from - 2.2 to 40.7 percent, while a number of small to moderate-sized cities experienced the highest relative growth rates (http://www.dof.ca.gov/research/demographic/state_census_data_center/census_2010/documents/2010Census_Pop_Rankers.xls). The ten fastest growing cities had average

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annual percentage changes ranging from 7.9 to 28.2 percent, with an average of 12.9 percent growth (Table 4.9.3). City annexations and housing construction prior to 2008 are due in part to these high growth rates. Each year, these factors combine to result in a different set of small and medium sized cities experiencing high growth.

Table 4.9.3 Percentage Change of the Top Ten Fastest Growing California Cities (2000 – 2010)		
City	Population (2010)	Percent change 2000-2010
Lincoln	42,819	282.1%
Beaumont	36,877	223.9%
Murrieta	103,466	133.7%
Brentwood	51,481	120.9%
American Canyon	19,454	99.0%
Imperial	14,758	95.2%
Perris	68,386	89.0%
San Jacinto	44,199	85.9%
Victorville	115,903	81.0%
Lake Ellsinore	51,821	79.1%

Source:

http://www.dof.ca.gov/research/demographic/reports/estimates/cities_ranked/view.php

4.9.3 Population Projections

California's total population has grown consistently since the 1850s, and projections show that strong growth will likely continue (Figure 4.9.1). Between 2010 and 2020, population is projected to grow at about 1.4 percent per year, with the result that California is projected to have about 44.1 million residents by the end of the decade (http://www.dof.ca.gov/research/demographic/state_census_data_center/historical_census_1850-2010/view.php). However, these projections may be high if the economy is slow to recover over the next ten years.

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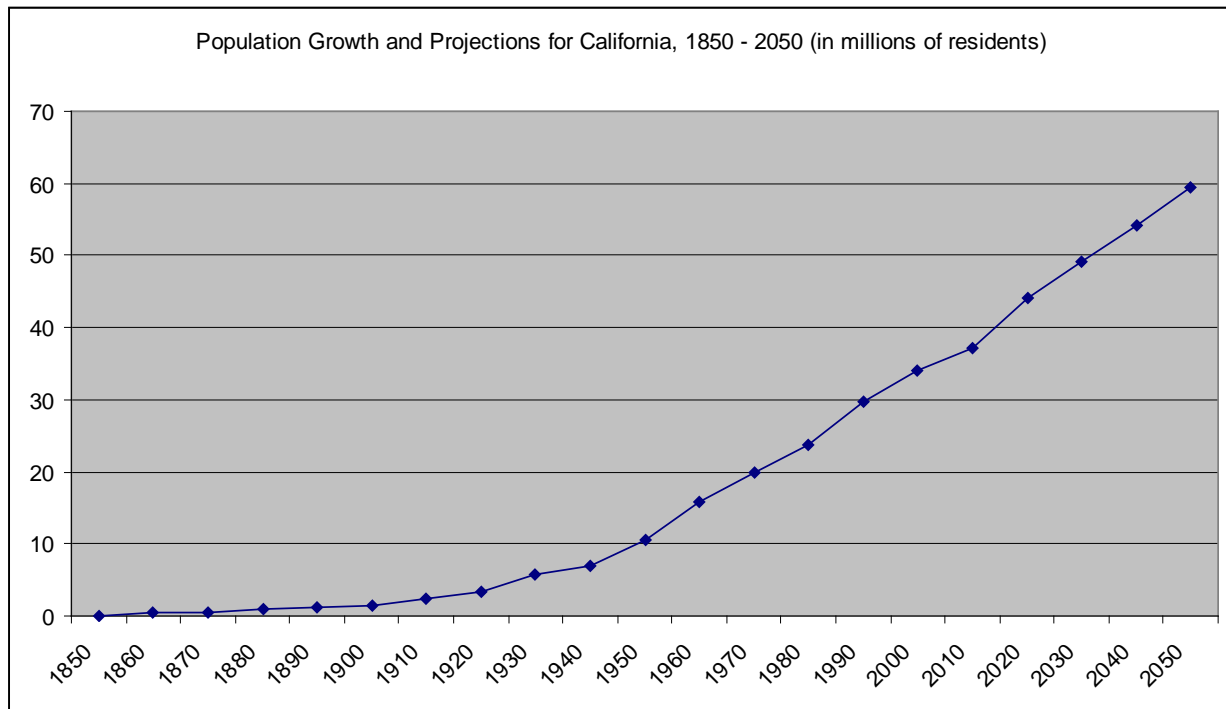


Figure 4.9.1 Historic and projected population growth in California, 1850-2050

Sources: http://www.dof.ca.gov/research/demographic/state_census_data_center/historical_census_1850-2010/documents/2010-1850_STCO_IncCities-FINAL.xls;
<http://www.dof.ca.gov/research/demographic/reports/projections/p-1/documents/P-1%20Report%20Tables.xls>

The population in forest and rangeland counties increased from 5.6 million people to 6.3 million (about 13.4%) between 2000 and 2010, and is expected to increase to over 7.8 million in 2020. This is an average annual rate of 2.0 percent per year, or about double that for the state taken as a whole. While the Sierra Bioregion overall is growing at a higher rate than the statewide average, there is significant variation among the counties that make up that bioregion. In Figure 4.9.2, counties in darker colors are projected to grow at a faster rate.

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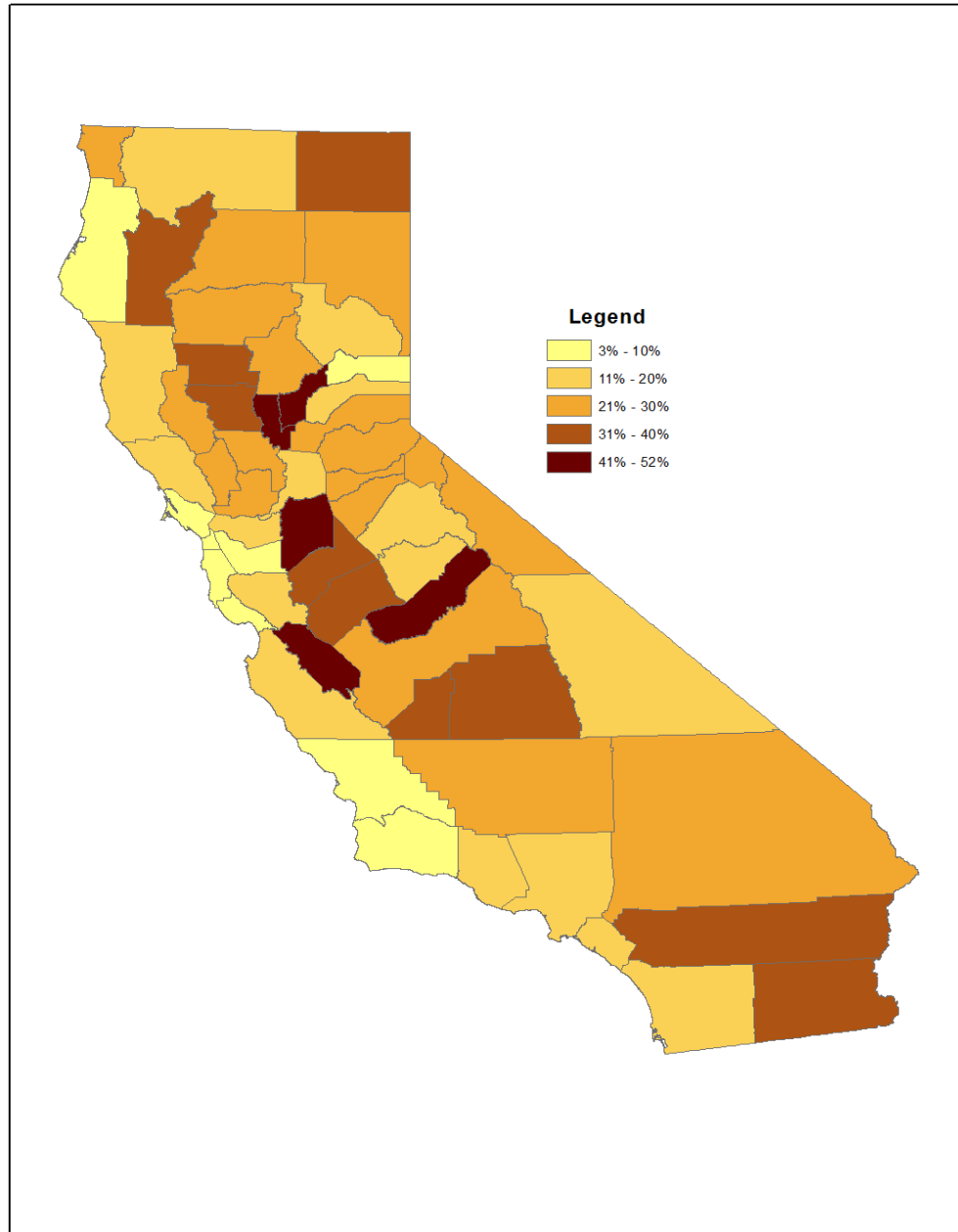


Figure 4.9.2 Projected rate of county population increase (2000-2020)
Source: Compiled by CAL FIRE from DOF, 2010

CAL FIRE grouped counties into bioregions to determine population projections on a regional basis (Figure 4.9.3). For example, the Sierra bioregion is an area where a rapidly growing population will have impacts on the extensive forests and rangelands. In the next decade, the Sierra bioregion population is expected to increase 21 percent from 843,000 to 1.02 million people. Table 4.9.4 shows the projected county-based population increases from 2010 to 2020 for all bioregions in the State. Overall, growth is projected to be greatest away from the coast, in interior bioregions with much forest and rangeland.

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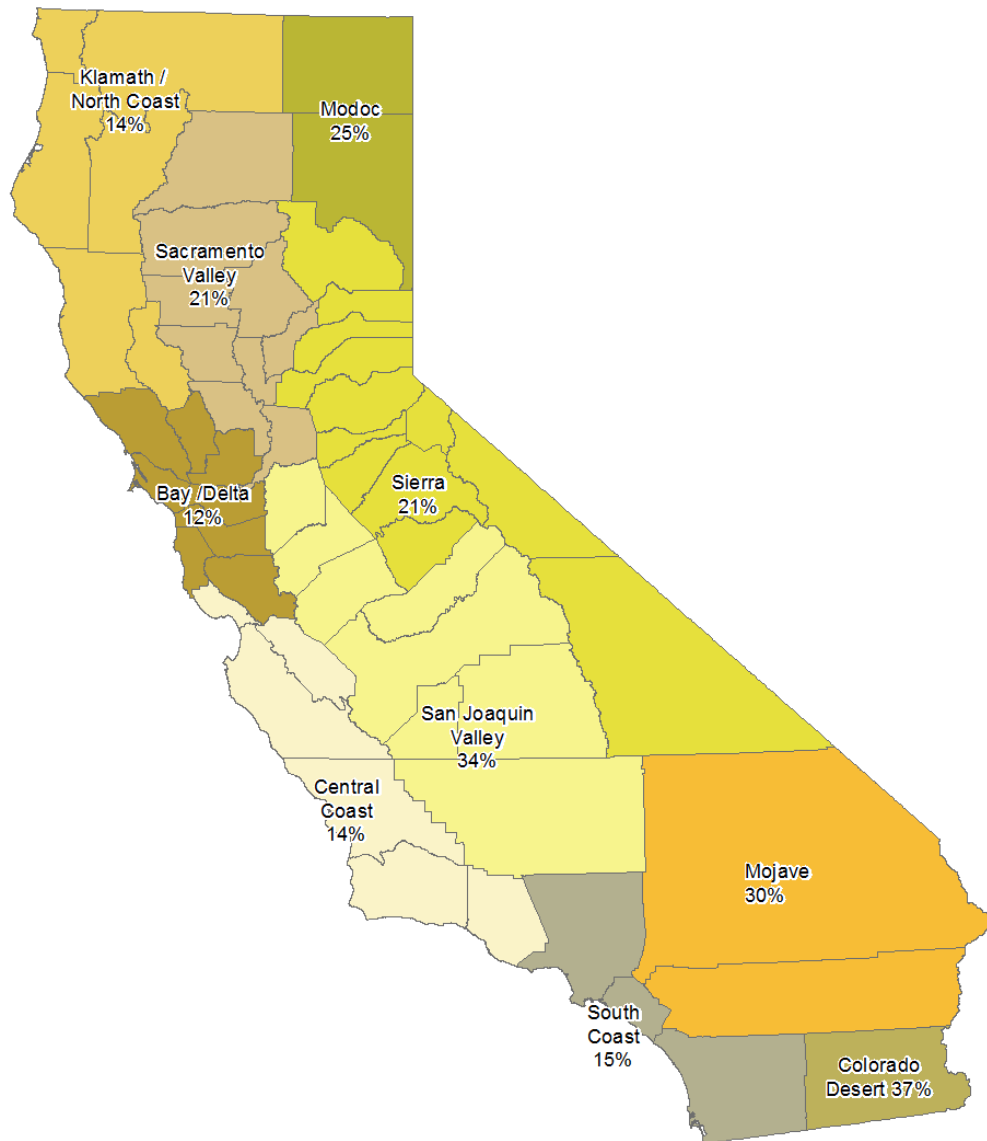


Figure 4.9.3 Projected rate of population increase by county-based bioregion (2010-2020)

Source: Compiled by CAL FIRE from DOF, 2011

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Table 4.9.4

Projected Population Growth by Bioregion and County (2010-2020)

Bioregion/county	2010	2020	Percent change 2010-2020
California	37,253,956	44,135,923	18%
Bay/Delta			
Alameda County	1,510,271	1,663,481	10%
Contra Costa County	1,049,025	1,237,544	18%
Marin County	252,409	260,305	3%
Napa County	136,484	165,786	21%
San Francisco County	805,235	844,466	5%
San Mateo County	718,451	761,455	6%
Santa Clara County	1,781,642	1,992,805	12%
Solano County	413,344	503,248	22%
Sonoma County	483,878	546,151	13%
Totals	7,150,739	7,975,241	12%
Colorado Desert			
Imperial County	174,528	239,149	37%
Modoc			
Lassen County	34,895	42,394	21%
Modoc County	9,686	13,134	36%
Totals	44,581	55,528	25%
Mojave			
Riverside County	2,189,641	2,904,848	33%
San Bernardino County	2,035,210	2,581,371	27%
Totals	4,224,851	5,486,219	30%
North Coast/Klamath			
Del Norte County	28,610	36,077	26%
Humboldt County	134,623	142,167	6%
Lake County	64,665	77,912	20%
Mendocino County	87,841	102,017	16%
Siskiyou County	44,900	51,283	14%
Trinity County	13,786	18,236	32%
Totals	374,425	427,692	14%
Sacramento Valley			
Butte County	220,000	281,442	28%
Colusa County	21,419	29,588	38%
Glenn County	28,122	37,959	35%
Sacramento County	1,418,788	1,622,306	14%
Shasta County	177,223	224,386	27%
Sutter County	94,737	141,159	49%
Tehama County	63,463	79,484	25%
Yolo County	200,849	245,052	22%
Yuba County	72,155	109,216	51%
Totals	2,296,756	2,770,592	21%

Bioregion/county	2010	2020	Percent change 2010-2020
San Joaquin Valley			
Fresno County	930,450	1,201,792	29%
Kern County	839,631	1,086,113	29%
Kings County	152,982	205,707	34%
Madera County	150,865	212,874	41%
Merced County	255,793	348,690	36%
San Joaquin County	685,306	965,094	41%
Stanislaus County	514,453	699,144	36%
Tulare County	442,179	599,117	35%
Totals	3,971,659	5,318,531	34%
Sierra			
Alpine County	1,175	1,453	24%
Amador County	38,091	47,593	25%
Calaveras County	45,578	56,318	24%
El Dorado County	181,058	221,140	22%
Inyo County	18,546	20,495	11%
Mariposa County	18,251	21,743	19%
Mono County	14,202	18,080	27%
Nevada County	98,764	114,451	16%
Placer County	348,432	428,535	23%
Plumas County	20,007	22,934	15%
Sierra County	3,240	3,508	8%
Tuolumne County	55,365	64,161	16%
Totals	842,709	1,020,411	21%
Central Coast			
Monterey County	415,057	476,642	15%
San Benito County	55,269	83,792	52%
San Luis Obispo County	269,637	293,540	9%
Santa Barbara County	423,895	459,498	8%
Santa Cruz County	262,382	287,480	10%
Ventura County	823,318	956,392	16%
Totals	2,249,558	2,557,344	14%
South Coast			
Los Angeles County	9,818,605	11,214,237	14%
Orange County	3,010,232	3,520,265	17%
San Diego County	3,095,313	3,550,714	15%
Totals	15,924,150	18,285,216	15%

Source: DOF, 2011 and CAL FIRE

4.9.4 Housing Issues and Trends

During the 1980s and 1990s, construction of new housing units showed a long-term overall decline in California. New construction picked up during the housing and real estate boom of the early 2000s. With the collapse of the housing market and subsequent economic recession, beginning in the years 2007-2008, California was hit very hard in numerous areas, and recovery in the construction industry since then has been stalled or slow. Still over the decade, California added 1.5 million new housing units (2010 Census Briefs: Housing Characteristics).

In the years just prior to the collapse, inflated housing prices fueled booms in home sales and prices, as well as new home construction. Prior to the bust, in 2004, nearly 213,000 new homes and apartments were built – the highest level since 1989 (Department of Housing and Community Development, 2006). June of 2006 still saw over 13,000 new housing starts. But just two years later in that same month, the number had plummeted to around 4,000 – a nearly 70% drop. New starts have continued to decline significantly, and in 2011 have hovered between one thousand and two thousand per month.

In California there has been a trend towards increased development in rural communities (CAL FIRE, 2002). A total of 11.8 million homes are located in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI). Of this, 4.9 million housing units (42 percent) are exposed to High or greater Fire Threat. Furthermore, of these, 4.1 million homes (84 percent) are from urban areas, where density of housing units exceeds one unit per acre. Thus while the land area considered WUI is dominated by areas of relatively low development density, the majority of houses at risk come from urbanized areas.

Table 4.9.5 provides a county-based summary of acres by housing density and land use class for each Bioregion. Using the 2010 census data housing unit density was classified into the following four categories, where all classes other than wildlands would be considered as potential WUI:

- Wildland (< 1 unit per 20 acres)
- Rural (1 or more units per 20 acres and less than one unit per 5 acres).
- Interface (1 or more units per five acres and less than one unit per acre)
- Urban (1 or more units per acre)

A vast majority of California's 101,452,187 acres is classified as "wildland." The next predominate class is "rural." These two classes are often targeted for development to meet the demands of a growing population. Between 2000 and 2010, close to 302,000 wildland and rural acres in the State were lost to development pressures. The State average conversion rate was 0.3% over this period. A total of 19 Counties exceeded this conversion rate over the same time period, with more than eight counties converting at triple or more than the average. These Counties included Placer (2.9% or 27,437 acres), Sacramento (2.0% or 12,968 acres), Riverside (1.8% or 82,483 acres), Nevada (1.4% or 8,767 acres) Amador (1.2% or 4,760 acres), San Joaquin (1.1% or 9,983 acres), El Dorado (1.1% or 12,416 acres), and Calaveras (0.9% or 5,985 acres).

On a bioregion basis, the Mojave region lost close to 124,000 acres of rural and wildlands between 2000-2010, close to double of that lost in the San Joaquin (68,000 acres) and Sierra (65,000 acres) bioregions.

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Table 4.9.5. Acres by Housing Density and Land Use Classes (2010)

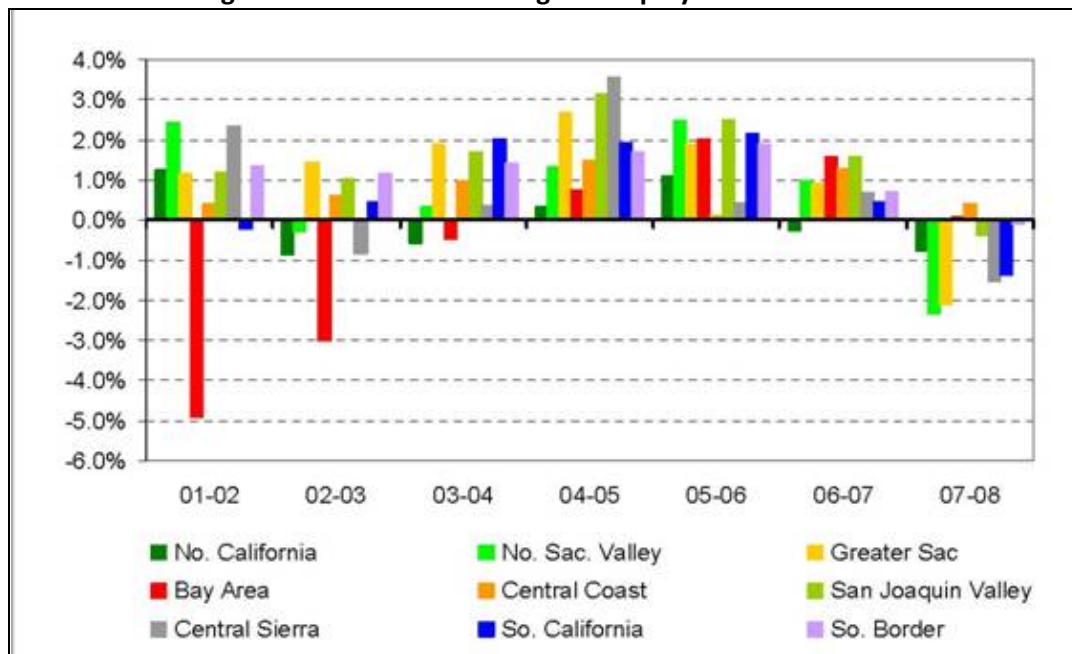
Bioregion	County	Wildland	Rural	Interface	Urban	Grand Total
BAY/DELTA		3,797,018	273,659	234,829	484,653	4,790,159
	Alameda	405,109	6,640	22,334	90,666	524,749
	Contra Costa	354,152	18,721	42,312	99,766	514,949
	Marin	327,050	6,171	16,430	29,330	378,980
	Napa	447,603	35,955	10,796	11,465	505,820
	San Francisco	49,204	245	705	18,724	68,878
	San Mateo	273,644	13,237	20,185	46,302	353,368
	Santa Clara	633,427	49,945	38,973	113,567	835,911
	Solano	512,812	20,133	14,203	34,998	582,144
	Sonoma	794,017	122,615	68,892	39,836	1,025,359
CENTRAL COAST		7,751,894	280,049	167,694	166,356	8,365,993
	Monterey	1,996,860	63,648	34,274	25,531	2,120,313
	San Benito	861,772	20,012	4,124	3,527	889,435
	San Luis Obispo	2,004,781	55,921	40,442	23,759	2,124,902
	Santa Barbara	1,673,285	32,421	21,978	31,581	1,759,266
	Santa Cruz	162,438	71,311	33,334	18,556	285,638
	Ventura	1,052,757	36,736	33,543	63,402	1,186,439
COLORADO DESERT		2,824,527	20,271	11,220	11,858	2,867,876
	Imperial	2,824,527	20,271	11,220	11,858	2,867,876
KLAMATH/NORTH COAST		11,798,793	227,314	101,129	32,047	12,159,283
	Del Norte	625,271	11,206	10,779	1,835	649,092
	Humboldt	2,200,757	56,590	23,627	12,619	2,293,593
	Lake	791,250	33,346	18,769	8,302	851,666
	Mendocino	2,150,641	64,958	28,298	4,766	2,248,663
	Siskiyou	4,011,886	33,188	14,002	3,810	4,062,886
	Trinity	2,018,988	28,025	5,654	714	2,053,381
MODOC		5,672,419	28,345	5,407	3,130	5,709,301
	Lassen	2,992,600	20,571	3,780	2,418	3,019,369
	Modoc	2,679,819	7,774	1,627	712	2,689,931
MOJAVE		16,445,557	387,252	312,785	393,421	17,539,015
	Riverside	4,105,397	195,151	159,343	212,303	4,672,194
	San Bernardino	12,340,160	192,102	153,442	181,117	12,866,821
SACRAMENTO VALLEY		8,352,103	412,509	149,420	196,674	9,110,705
	Butte	939,689	76,565	33,459	23,462	1,073,175
	Colusa	729,184	6,896	2,143	1,717	739,939
	Glenn	830,882	13,209	3,227	1,917	849,236
	Sacramento	420,093	57,414	38,567	119,813	635,886
	Shasta	2,294,910	111,626	37,955	17,610	2,462,102
	Sutter	356,779	19,124	5,789	7,775	389,467
	Tehama	1,811,024	64,885	15,271	3,725	1,894,904
	Yolo	618,598	13,776	6,550	14,972	653,895
	Yuba	350,946	49,014	6,459	5,683	412,101
SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY		16,377,497	695,899	216,717	297,343	17,587,456
	Fresno	3,558,866	178,380	41,215	68,666	3,847,127
	Kern	5,015,742	84,407	54,475	71,659	5,226,284
	Kings	852,356	22,625	5,286	10,406	890,673
	Madera	1,268,466	71,503	30,074	8,181	1,378,224
	Merced	1,173,009	59,101	15,517	17,746	1,265,373
	San Joaquin	739,625	97,244	27,214	47,640	911,723
	Stanislaus	827,165	87,615	15,469	39,384	969,632
	Tulare	2,942,268	95,025	27,467	33,660	3,098,420
SIERRA		16,596,059	565,266	231,479	91,559	17,484,363
	Alpine	470,754	1,955	969	313	473,991
	Amador	335,091	32,685	17,118	2,534	387,429
	Calaveras	579,082	58,785	19,818	5,328	663,013
	El Dorado	930,266	147,388	49,481	18,403	1,145,538
	Inyo	6,535,860	5,691	2,219	2,070	6,545,841
	Mariposa	882,793	47,421	4,297	470	934,982
	Mono	1,991,958	5,749	3,261	2,844	2,003,811
	Nevada	471,470	103,210	36,238	11,915	622,833
	Placer	775,031	87,077	60,147	37,700	959,956
	Plumas	1,634,012	24,853	11,928	2,827	1,673,619
	Sierra	610,414	3,376	1,543	322	615,655
	Tuolumne	1,379,327	47,078	24,460	6,832	1,457,697
SOUTH DESERT		4,269,492	285,816	317,712	965,013	5,838,035
	Los Angeles	1,846,856	98,794	134,874	533,829	2,614,352
	Orange	268,514	10,956	30,918	201,138	511,526
	San Diego	2,154,122	176,067	151,920	230,047	2,712,156
California Total		93,885,359	3,176,381	1,748,393	2,642,054	101,452,187

4.9.5 Employment

The 2006 annual average non-seasonally adjusted unemployment rate in California was 4.9%, but due to the most recent economic recession this rate had climbed to 12.4% by 2010. The unemployment rate showed a slight improvement in 2011, with an annual average statewide unemployment rate of 11.7%. Rural areas in general are slower to improve in a weak economy, and some rural areas unemployment rates remained in the 20-25% range during 2011. Statewide, total nonfarm jobs grew by 21.1% from 1995-2008, but declined significantly in 2009, resulting in net growth of 10.7% during the period of 1995-2009. Population and total employment grew by six percent from 2001-2008, while the average annual wage grew by 24.6% over the same period. Much of the wage increase is due to four minimum wage increases from 2001-2008, from \$6.25 in 2001 to \$8.00 per hour in 2008. Service sector jobs have grown slightly, while jobs in residential housing construction have fallen recently by over 13%. Recent economic forecasts project employment in California to pick up slightly (about 2% annually) in the coming years.

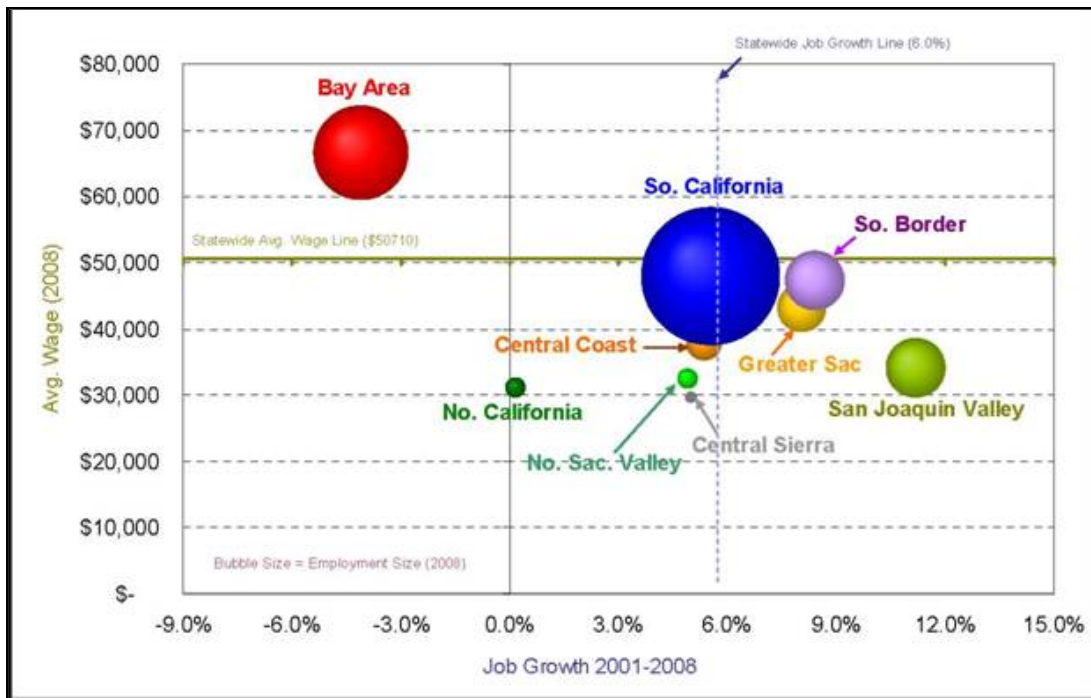
During the 2000s regional job and wage trends varied considerably. These overall regional measures capture the net result of the increases and declines of various employment sectors Figure 4.9.4 summarizes regional year-over change in employment for 2001-2008. Industry sector declines, such as the 2001-2003 dot com bust in the Bay Area, and the 2008 construction bust in the Sacramento Area have a large impact on the overall regional employment. Figure 4.9.5 depicts job growth, unemployment rates and wage growth for the regional economies (county-based bioregions) as defined by California Economic Strategy Panel (CESP) (AB 119 repealed the law that created the CESP effective 1/1/12). The most populous urban regions—the Bay Area, Southern California, Southern Border (San Diego) and Sacramento—had varying rates of job and wage growth over the years as the economic climate changed in the state.

Figure 4.9.4 Year-over Change in Employment 2001-2008



Population, Employment, and Housing

Figure 4.9.5 Employment, Job Growth, and Average Annual Wage 2001-2008



Source: [California 2010 Economic Profile](#)

Derived from California Regional Economies Employment Series (CREE) Data.